

bills through the legislative process so they do become law. We should restore health care that was promised to our military retirees and to which they are entitled after devoting their lives to defend this country. We should keep our promise to America's military retirees.

I do ask that you help me support this bill. It is a great bill. It is a broken promise that we have not kept to our military retirees.

I want to acknowledge the efforts of four organizations that have been instrumental in crafting this legislation: The Retired Enlisted Association, The Retired Officers Association, The National Association for Uniformed Services, and the Class Act Group of Military Retirees.

I also want to thank Congressman CHARLIE NORWOOD for his cosponsorship and his efforts.

Before I close, Madam Speaker, I want to pay special tribute to one man: Jim Whittington. I want all of my colleagues here in Congress to know that the introduction of this landmark legislation is living proof that democracy really works in our country, and that one American citizen really can make a difference.

Jim Whittington is the most tenacious individual I know. Last March, Jim organized a summit of military retirees in his hometown of Laurel, Mississippi. The summit attracted hundreds of retirees from the southeastern United States.

Madam Speaker, if you ever have the opportunity to meet Jim, be prepared to get an earful. He is articulate and passionate about this issue.

And he is selfless. Jim does all right for himself, but he cares about his fellow retirees, many of whom have been abandoned by their country and need help.

Madam Speaker, I would not be introducing this legislation today without the persistence of Jim Whittington. He is what democracy is all about.

In closing, Madam Speaker, I am proud to introduce today "The Keep Our Promise to America's Military Retirees Act."

Passing this bill will let America's military retirees know that we honor them, we respect them, we appreciate them, and that we will keep our word to them.

And passing this bill will get the attention of the next generation of Americans, who must not be discouraged from military service.

They must know that the American people will value the sacrifice they would make by devoting their lives to national service.

After all, Madam Speaker, we must face the fact that we will always need heroes who will be willing to make the ultimate sacrifice!

#### BUDGET COMMITTEE REPORT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KASICH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KASICH. Madam Speaker, pursuant to Sec. 314 of the Congressional Budget Act, I hereby submit for printing in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD revisions to the allocation for

the House Committee on Appropriations pursuant to House Report 106-288 to reflect \$77,000,000 in additional new budget authority and \$13,000,000 in additional outlays for international arrearages. This will increase the allocation to the House Committee on Appropriations to \$543,200,000,000 in budget authority and \$582,478,000,000 in outlays for fiscal year 2000.

As reported by the House Committee on Appropriations, H.R. 2606, a bill making appropriations for Foreign Operations, export financing, and related programs for fiscal year 2000, includes \$77,000,000 in budget authority and \$13,000,000 in outlays for international arrearages.

These adjustments shall apply while the legislation is under consideration and shall take effect upon final enactment of the legislation.

#### ON AGRICULTURE APPROPRIATIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Madam Speaker, I rise to object this evening to the manipulation of the leadership of this body, particularly the Speaker, Mr. HASTERT, and the majority leader of the other body, Mr. LOTT, that is essentially disenfranchising the membership of this body with regard to one of the most important issues before us, and, that is, meeting the needs of rural America, the disaster affected regions of our country, our farmers, who are experiencing historically low prices and bad weather, sort of twin eviscerators, that we are witnessing the hemorrhaging of equity out of rural America.

For the record and for the American people and hopefully for my fellow Members, I come to the floor tonight to recount what has been happening here sort of below the surface where the press is generally not picking up on it.

Employing what certainly must be the most unusual committee process I have ever experienced in my 17 years here in the House, the Republican leadership of this House has basically taken the drafting authority of our appropriations agriculture subcommittee away from our membership. Last week, the Republican leadership of this House as well as the Senate subcommittee twice recessed our conference committee because they could not reach agreement on the Republican side of the aisle on at least three provisions relating to regional compacts regarding milk, sanctions on terrorist states, and the level of disaster assistance that is really necessary in our country to meet the needs of our farmers in rural communities coast to coast. Our subcommittee has not met since last Wednesday due to that disorganization. Then over the weekend and early this week, Speaker HASTERT and Senator

LOTT, their offices began drafting something for floor action. That effort is now being circulated in the form of a committee report that a majority of House subcommittee Republicans thus far, as of 5 p.m. today, had refused to sign, and which no Democrat had seen at all, certainly not those of the subcommittee of jurisdiction where we have legal responsibility to meet our obligations to the American people.

The Republican leadership appears to be deal-making on such matters as mandatory price reporting, for example, to try to get a majority of the members on their side of the aisle to sign on to that report. The difficulty is that if that happens, let us say they make enough deals to bring that bill to the floor, that will be brought to the floor without our subcommittee membership in conference being allowed to amend and discuss under regular order as is required by the rules of this institution. Thus, Democrats for sure will not be able to offer amendments on such critical issues as the fairness and the adequacy of the formulas and the commodities and sectors to be covered in the bill, as well as the economic level of assistance and disaster assistance titles of the bill, which are extremely expensive and depending on how they are drafted benefit certain regions of the country and certain sectors more than others. We will not be able to deal with the sanctions issue, we will not be able to deal with many of the other titles of the bill that our members wanted a chance to discuss. We will only be left with the option on this floor of taking that report and being given a moment in time to vote to recommit it back to conference, which obviously has been recessed, if we do not like something that is in that report.

As of Tuesday at 5 o'clock, now it is 6:25 here in Washington, the minority membership of the committee does not have a copy of the working document, at a time when rural America is in crisis. I have really been working with the leadership on our side of the aisle and I have pleaded with the leadership on the other side of the aisle to let us go back to regular order.

This is wrong, this is not the way to run the Nation, and really what you find out is in the end that good government is good politics. If we use the full membership of this institution, if we each bring our experiences to the table, which is what a conference committee is supposed to be for, in the end we produce legislation that meets the needs of all corners and all quarters of our country. This is really the wrong way to do business.

Today we had to pass a continuing resolution to keep this institution and the country operating for the next 2 weeks in order that these respective bills might be finished. The Agriculture appropriation bill this year is